

[My father, George M. Hunt]

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Project

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Lubbock County

Lubbock Texas

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pg. 1 [4] [HALF A CENTURY ON THE SOUTH PLAINS?]

"My father, George M. [Hunt?], brought his family to the South Plains in 1884, from Sterling, Kansas," and Mrs. George C. Wolffarth. "I was quite small then, but I have heard the details of the trip recounted numbers of times by my parents and the older children of our family. ?

"There were 14 people who started on this journey to the Texas Plains. There was were Henry Baldwin and his family, [?] Paul Seely, Miss Celia Corrigan, and an elderly man, whose name my father soon forgot, and then our family. We began the trip with three wagons, each drawn by, two horses and my father's buggy. Jimmie, our pet pony was hitched to the buggy.["?]

"Now one of the wagons and the team belonged to the elderly man. My father had made a trade with him to bear his part of the expenses of the trip if he the man would bring a lead of our household goods in his wagon, but on the [?] fifth day out from Sterling, he changed

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his mind and would come no farther, so father had to transfer mother's organ and the other things which the old man had been carrying on his freighter, to the two remaining wagons, which were already over loaded, and we continued on our journey."

"We began the long trip on the afternoon of the 5th of November and reached Estacado 31 days later [????] . [Our?] route ran from Sterling to Dodge City along the left bank of the Arkansas River."

"At Dodge City the party turned [south?] and took [The?] Jones and Plummer Trail," Mrs. Wolfforth continued, "We had three rivers to cross after that before we reached our destination. [?]First we crossed the [Cimarron?], which was treacherous on account of the quick-sand quicksand. There were accounts given of a whole outfit outfit's having been swallowed up in the river bed a short time before this, and natives there advised our men to drive through the stream as quickly as they could, which they did, using the whips to, keep the horses from stopping to drink, and we forded the river without disaster. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 ?

"Next we came to the [Canadian?] River," Mrs. Wolfforth went on. "This river was not deep excepting where holes had been washed out in the sand. [Anlong?] train of wagons crossed just in front of [?]. These wagons were drawn by about twenty oxen. Men on horses [rode?] across the river and picked out a crossing place before they let the ox-teams go in, so that we crossed behind them and had no trouble getting over to the other side. ?

"When we reached Red River, we found it dry at this point, and experienced no difficulty whatever in crossing. ?

"There were not many towns on our route," Mrs. Wolffarth explained. "After we left Dodge City the next town we reached was [Mobeetie?], the Clarendon. Two or three days after we left [Clarenton?] we came to the headquarters of the Quitaque ranch. This ranch house was located near the mouth of the Tale Canyon. Our party had always traveled

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together, but on the second day after we left the [Quitaque?] ranch, my parents took my little baby brother, / sister Mirta and me in the buggy and left camp at noon before the wagons started. My father had been told that when we reached Blanco Canyon, we would have to go about [two?] miles to reach Hank Smith's home, and he thought that we were only a few miles from Mr. Smith's place, but it was much farther than he had reckoned and somehow he got confused and lost his way in the canyon. We were separated from the wagons and traveled around over [dim?] trails through the canyons. Night found us in a ravine, far from our party. We had no food and no water. The few [wraps?] that my father and mother had brought along in the buggy were not sufficient to keep us warm. This was about the first week in December and it was rather cold in the canyon, even with the mild weather that we had that winter. There was no moon and it was very dark, father got out of the buggy and sought for a protected nook in the ravine where we could spend the night. Suddenly he came to a [dugout?]. He crept inside where there was a faint light showing at the back of the dugout. This proved to be coals in a large fire-place fireplace at the back. There was a cottonwood back-log, partly burned ? Father stirred the coals and soon had a fire going. No one appeared and we spent the night alone in the dugout. There were no beds, so my parents made us lie on the wraps, while they spent the night sitting up. We were warm and in a measure protected from the wild animals that [?] the plains. The greater part of the next morning was spent in trying to get back on the [right?] trail and at least the wagons were located and we were united again. After a good meal we [started?] out once more looking for the Smith's rock house. We traveled all the afternoon without seeing a house anywhere. Night was coming down upon us and we were still in the canyon. Father and mother debated whether to pitch the tent and make camp for the night or to go on. They always set up the stove and put up the tent for the night. The men got out and walked down the canyon a little way[?] trying to get their bearing and then they heard the barking dogs in the distance [?] We followed the sound and soon located Hank Smith's house. They were not [surprised?] to see us as father had been sending his cousin, Dr. J. W. Hunt at [Estacado?] cards from different points of our journey and Dr.

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Hunt had [communicated?] with Mr. Smith, keeping him informed of our progress. The Smiths gave us a hearty welcome and we spent the night with them. "

"When we got to Estacado we found the little settlement to have a population of between 80 and 100 people. In another year and a half the population had increased to 125. "

"This settlement was generally known as ' The Quaker Colony , ' Mrs. Wolffarth said. "They had a church house which was a frame building, and here in this house we attended our first [Christmas?] service in the [state?] of Texas. "

"Christmas Day was warm and beautiful and we had a watermelon feast on the church house lawn. Isiah Cox, who lived three miles of Estacado furnished the melons. He had stored the melons in hi cellar and they were in fine condition for the Christmas feast. 4

"We lived at Estacado until 1890. These were busy years for my father." Mrs. Wolfforth observed. "Judge G. M. Swink of Dallas had been appointed to come to Estacado and have a survey made of all enclosed lands. He secured a few helpers and my father was employed to go with Judge Swink and made a survey of the " Circle [?] Ranch " in Hale County ? This ranch was owned or controlled at that time by C. C. Slaughter. ?

"At this time Crosby County was not organized and was still attached to Baylor County for judical and surveying purposes. All of the records were kept at Seymour . This made it very inconvenient for the men who tried to keep offices in Estacado, so through the request of Paris Cox, my father was appointed by the Commissioners of Baylor County as Justice of the Peace[?] This constituted his as Ex-Officio Notary Public. Along with the other duties required of him, my father was sometimes asked to perform ceremonies. "

"During this time my parents [kept?] a small boarding house which we called " ' The Llano House. " ' Father also had a little store ? Most of his supplies were hauled from Amarillo ? This was not any nearer than other towns where he could have gotten his goods, but the roads to the north were usually in better condition than the [other?] roads so that we

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formed the habit of going to Amarillo[?] On these trips we often saw deer, antelopes and wild horses."

"In [September?] 1890 we moved from Estacado to Lubbock. We settled in the North town, which was across the canyon ? This was the town which was laid out by F. E. Wheelock. We had sold the boarding house but still operated a store, this [?] was housed in a big tent. "

"There was one school in Lubbock at this time, which we attended. We also had our little social affairs ? church services were held at the court house. Altogether the young people really had a nice time in those days. ?

"In 1894 I taught the summer school at Canyon." Mrs. Wolffarth said. "And on the 24th of August in 1898, I was married to George C. Wolffarth. We had our 5 ceremony performed by our Methodist pastor, H. A. Story. It was a home wedding and we received many presents from our friends. Among the things was a heavy silver caster set, beautifully engraved and I still have it. Then there were chickens and blankets, besides other useful things for the house, which we we appreciated very much. "

"I have lived on the South Plains for 52 years." Mrs. [Wolffarth?] concluded. "Many changes have taken place in the town and over the country during these years. I have seen the big ranches go and the farms take their place. Most of the cattle are gone and the cattlemen have changed their lines of business. Some of them turned to politics, and some to banking. The cowboys who used to ride the range , exchanged their lariats for hoes, or put their ponies to plows and began to till the soil. The Plains have changed, new business houses are constantly going up, new residences are being built every day and still there are not sufficient accommodations for the new people who move to Lubbock. Out little town on the plains is becoming a little city now. "

"There are just a few of the very old pioneers left," Mrs. [Wolffarth?] said [?] softly. "My parents are both gone, many of our old friends are gone, but we have a few old-timers with

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us yet. There is Judge P. [?]. Brown. I went to school to him and Mrs. W. T. Boone too. For three generations the [Boons?] have instructed the Hunts or the Hunts were instructors for the Boons. First Mrs. Boone [was?] my [teacher?] then her children were instructed by me, and after that my little children were taught by one of the Boon children. "

"Lubbock is a fine town ? I say that the credit for the real making of the town should be given largely to the [cattlemen?][?] They were the backbone of the plains, they withstood the hardships of those early days and blazed the trail for civilization; they helped build the first settlements. When we first came to the Plains, my people knew nothing of cattlemen, we had heard rough stories about the cowboys and we 6 dreaded then even more than we did the Indians, but we found out before we had been here long, how mistaken we were, and soon learned that honesty and friendliness characterized the cowmen of the great Plains. ? "

The George G. [Wolffarths'?] are one of Lubbock's most prominent pioneer families. Mrs. [Wolffarth?] has always taken an active part in the social life of the city and has also taken a great interest in the educational program. Mr.[Wolffarth?] was the First District Clerk of Lubbock County and served in that [capacity?] for 8 years. He organized and built the Citizen's National Bank and was President of this bank for 14 years. He was a cattleman in the early days on the Plains. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mrs. George C. [Woffforth?]...... Lubbock, Texas.